Response to the European Commission Green Paper

From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation Funding

COM(2011) 48
1. How should the Common Strategic Framework make EU research and innovation funding more attractive and easy to access for participants? What is needed in addition to a single entry point with common IT tools, a one stop shop for support, a streamlined set of funding instruments covering the full innovation chain and further steps towards administrative simplification?

The unification of rules, procedures and simplification of management must be developed on new basis in accordance with the new objectives of the next Common Strategic Framework to make participation less difficult and expensive. In fact rethinking the rules according to the objectives and not setting objectives in light of existing rules is very important for innovation and can have a strong impact on participants. A single entry point for all proposals is essential to guarantee an undifferentiated and consistent management of applicants’ information and proposals. Moreover there is the need of a “single decision” and a “single contract”, for projects that cover the entire innovation cycle. Especially in case of big projects, that include different steps (from research to market) to be submitted to the same evaluation process. This would foster the consortium partners to cooperate and coordinate since the first stages of project’s design. Moreover Work Programmes must have clear innovation objectives and their annual evolution priorities that will be probably object of future EU funding should be at earlier disposal of the scientific community. The application procedure must be easier and quicker, uniform and predictable interpretation and application of the rules by EC DGs / POs are key. The changing contact persons have to be avoided. It is necessary to reduce the number and size of official documents.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? Very important

2. How should EU funding best cover the full innovation cycle from research to market uptake?

To cover the full innovation cycle innovation should be funded at every level: technical, theoretic, creative, commercial and all the actors must be beneficiaries of EU funds. The chain end users – enterprises – research can play a key role in coupling both the development of advanced products and their use. The innovation and entrepreneurial
culture should cross cut the funding “from research to retail”, cooperation between the universities and the SMEs must be encouraged.

Large scale research infrastructures, which play a key role in promoting innovation (access providers, pivot centers of networking activities) represent a strategic means to achieve the objectives and should be largely supported.

To sustain banks investing in innovative projects and the dialogue with the financial institutions training, communication and advisory group could be improved. New instruments (proof of concept fund and a support structure for “open innovation”) must be enhanced to overcome common difficulties mainly addressing start-up actions, precompetitive research, downstream testing and demonstration.

RSFF run by EIB should be developed in a more SME-friendly way, especially for the more innovative ones, (more focus on early stages, better co-operation with business angels, seeds and venture capital, easier access, less and simpler rules, support for smaller projects) as well as the guarantee fund, public procurement, smart regulation and standardization to encourage bottom-up innovation.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? Very important

3 What are the characteristics of EU funding that maximise the benefit of acting at the EU level? Should there be a strong emphasis on leveraging other sources of funding?

The benefit of acting at European level is to increase the efficient use of European resources, enhancing the value of a common market and creating critical mass in a single researchers community. Moreover the EU funding external source of evaluation, based on peer reviewing by a number of international experts, provides a more equal treatment of proposals, and the opportunity to share knowledge and improve one’s own research and networking.

The collaboration networks is a unique asset for Europe that promote cross-border integration of European research efforts. Projects which are likely to get a direct industrial implementation should be better awarded. Therefore there should be an emphasis on leveraging funding that allows similar conditions, especially from industry and other competitiveness-oriented sources.

Actions such as the ones under People, and the ERC bring the best in term of benefit for researchers.
European level large scale research infrastructures (distributed, electronic, etc.), building on the work of the research infrastructure program and on the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), represent one of the best examples of maximizing the benefits of acting at EU level and should receive increasing support in the future.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Very important**

4 How should EU research and innovation funding be used to pool Member States’ research and innovation resources? Should Joint Programming Initiatives between groups of Member States be supported?

Joint Programming Initiatives are essential to a EU strategic approach to global issues which member states may be not able to confront by their own, and should be based on quality, not duplicate existing programmes. JPIs are a very useful tool to set research priorities and they are essential to build up the ERA before 2014. After the first pilot phase the EC has to clearly define rules, procedures and financing system, including the EU financing participation. Joint Programming should be continued as a useful instrument to synchronize and harmonize national programmes. To keep this role it has to be under control of member states and funding should come from both national sources and CSF with the EC as a gatekeeper. The EC should ensure the contribution of top researchers and that excellent researchers from countries that are not part of the JPI discussion are able to participate.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**

5 What should be the balance between smaller, targeted projects and larger, strategic ones?

It is important to improve coordination and coherence between projects and the overall EU policy objectives. Greater importance should be also given to the dimension of the consortium linked to the calls’ objectives. It would be better to think of projects in term of longer or shorter time frame with regard to awaited results. This will help also to simplify the partnerships’ management and to reduce the time to grant.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**
6. How could the Commission ensure the balance between a unique set of rules allowing for radical simplification and the necessity to keep a certain degree of flexibility and diversity to achieve objectives of different instruments, and respond to the needs of different beneficiaries, in particular SMEs?

The acceptance of internal accounting practices of beneficiaries is desirable, avoiding the creation of separate/double accounting for projects. The reduction in the combinations between funding rates, participant types and category of activities should take into account the different types of actors involved in research; it should not be restricted to the sole difference between public and private institutions, but should also consider other categories (i.e. SMEs).

Flat rates and lump sums, even though simplifying the administrative and financial project management, should not be considered functional instruments to answer adequately to all types of projects, or cover the different cost structures (for example indirect costs).

The Commission should use more extensively simplified cost methods, proposing them as optional solutions, but not necessarily as alternatives to analytical mechanisms (that are more suited for those typical industrial systems), with reporting capacity and analytical accounting. It would be appropriate to reconsider the overheads rate foreseen for CA-CSA, considering that the current 7% is inadequate and undersized relative to the real costs faced by research actors.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? Important

7. What should be the measures of success for EU research and innovation funding? Which performance indicators could be used?

A proper representation of national and regional innovation performances is crucial. The definition of innovation performance indicators is not a neutral exercise but has concrete effects on international allocation of European funds and private investments. These indicators will assume greater relevance with the decrease of resources and the trend towards a focus on "smart specialization" (Centres of excellence).

It is necessary to devise new forward-looking indicators to measure the potential rather than the performance. These indicators should be built taking into account innovation in the broad sense, including elements such as creativity, continuous product improvement, design, commercial networks and marketing.
The definition of impact indicators strictly correlated to evaluation criteria is also of great importance to allow for lifecycle monitoring. These indicators should be included in the periodic project reports in order to evaluate, on a regular basis, the impact and the performance of the activities and results.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? Very important

8. How should EU research and innovation funding relate to regional and national funding? How should this funding complement funds from the future Cohesion policy, designed to help the less developed regions of the EU, and the rural development funds?

It is important to create new mechanisms to fine-tune different EU resources for research and innovation ones. New Common Strategic Framework’s initiatives should identify the links between the EU R&I perspective and/or objectives and the national or regional innovation systems and the cohesion policy. This one should be aligned with the Innovation Union goals and contribute not only to the pursuing of scientific excellence but also to unlock the research potential of the less developed regions.

Regions should develop smart specialization strategies via bottom-up processes including also scientists and enterprises. The intermediary organisations – such as Enterprise Europe Network, Chambers of Commerce, Regional Agencies for Innovation should play a more important role as links between local innovative enterprises and the European Commission. Large scale research infrastructures should act as a pivot of innovation and networking on the territory and be a strategic means of to link the local reality with EU wide dimension.

Structural and Cohesion funds should be increasingly directed towards strengthening the science and research base in the less developed corners of the EU, addressing identified scientific/innovation gaps and weaknesses. For instance it would be useful that Member States and European Union agree to finance European infrastructures and CSF proposals that are in the reserve list using Structural funds or national/regional budget for research and innovation.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? Important
9. How should a stronger focus on societal challenges affect the balance between curiosity-driven research and agenda-driven activities?

The focus on societal challenges, identified in the Europe 2020 strategy and on its seven flagship initiatives requires to adopt a systemic approach that integrates strategies, actions, objectives, actors and instruments. This approach implies the following activities:

1. Agenda driven activities with the aim of tackling the great societal challenges: the work of the European Commission should be more cross-sectorial and the Joint programming should be more exploited to agree on common European research strategies.

2. Curiosity driven agenda with the aim of sustaining bottom-up research: support for developing research talents, and new ideas but also local/ regional research needs as well as excellence. The budget should be increased compared to the previous FP.

A systematic approach will allows the integration of results deriving from different scientific fields and make them more operational. Therefore a broad dissemination of projects results is needed (including ERC). Research outcomes should be transferred to the different DGs and influence the strategic choices combining political and technological aspects (SET Plan, CAP, etc.).

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**

10. Should there be more room for bottom-up activities?

The successful examples of bottom-up activities (i.e. ERC grants, the People program, ..) will have to cover a key role in the upcoming CSF. It is necessary that a bottom up approach has a generally wider room in the next EU funding programme for research not only to be funded under the ERC programme. Need to better balance research activities having top-down approach with the ones having bottom-up approach, leaving a larger field of action to those initiatives arising from the specific needs of companies and research institutions. Other bottom-up funding schemes should be implemented.
Bottom-up is a way to attract young professionals from abroad, but also it can attract more actors from the private sectors.

However, a bottom-up activity is essentially curiosity-driven; and an adequate selection during the selection process of proposals instead of a too strict monitoring and controlling of every single step of the activities, to assure the excellence of participants is necessary.

The bottom-up initiatives should be encouraged taking into account the harmonization of policies of R&I at regional, national, European and international level. This approach requires a multi-level governance that has to be based on a strong coordination between EU and Member States.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**

11. **How should EU research and innovation funding best support policy-making and forward-looking activities?**

The nature of forward-looking activities is to be harmonized with much longer time horizons and operate as a revolving process with several iterations. During the performing of forward-looking activities researchers identify and select grand challenges themes, developing a vision and defining a strategic research area. For such a purpose, elaboration of the motivating ideas to reach the EU2020 and Innovation Union objectives will require building a new coalition of actors capable of answering to both societal challenges and emerging needs. A more direct involvement of expert end users play a key role, RDI funding by involving private companies should be involved as well as consideration must be given to other EU priorities (e.g. territorial cooperation programs especially regards cross-border cases). EU funding should grant the opportunity for such a coalition to join and work, allowing networking and functional interaction between forward-looking activities units and researchers (in different fields) on a basis of regular frequency.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**
12. **How should the role of the Commission’s Joint Research Centre be improved in supporting policy-making and forward-looking activities?**

The Common Strategic Framework should rethink the role of the Joint Research Centres to make them more effective taking into account the new EU 2020 objectives. The three non nuclear centers have to focus their activity on few priorities of high European added value. Especially the Centre in Ispra, could initiate and coordinate an European network of green technologies certification. Moreover the JRC could have a stronger role in the dissemination of research ‘results and in the communication/sharing of research projects information among DGs and training on IPRs.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**

13. **How could EU research and innovation activities attract greater interest and involvement of citizens and civil society?**

CSOs, NGOs, local authorities networks and different citizens’ associations must have more space and play an active/proposing role at the programmes and projects levels. The participation of local private-public partnerships for innovation should be promoted involving not only research and public entities, industries and also the civil society. Large Scale research infrastructures providing access and their networking activities should play a central role. The aim is to take into account society’s needs since the beginning of the project design to produce new innovative solutions. To bring innovation to the market in fact it will be necessary to know the main societal problems and the subsequent demand. Therefore projects must show their added value for the European society especially though the potential application of research results. Moreover the Science in Society programme must be continued and it should become horizontal with calls in the specific Scientific Programmes, targeting specific societal groups. Communication and dissemination activities have to have a greater support in the project design (especially in the evaluation). Information to citizens would however play a key role, preferably if performed by institutions with a specific expertise in scientific divulgation as ECSITE network.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**
14. How should EU funding best take account of the broad nature of innovation, including non-technological innovation, eco-innovation and social innovation?

The broad nature of innovation should be taken into account, going beyond the technology dimension and also considering other competences and activities, such as creativity, design, new business models and support services.

All the innovation cycle’s actors should be beneficiaries of the funds of the Common Strategic Framework. The financial sector should be highly considered, thus favouring the access to services and to resources needed for the exploitation of results.

The following measures should be implemented:

- Boost the “Proof of concept” to prove the feasibility of novel concepts, setting a link between research results and their exploitation.
- Favour international mobility of knowledge intensive entrepreneurs, on the basis of what is already provided for researchers.
- Support ‘traditional’ enterprises promoting Open Innovation, internationalisation (outside EU), the relationship with large industry and the association and collaboration between enterprises.
- Create an horizontal line devoted to ‘Capitalisation’ of research activities.
- Shift the focus from the project to the generated results, stimulating the presence of stakeholders in partnerships, in particular expert end users.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**

15. How should industrial participation in EU research and innovation programmes be strengthened? How should Joint Technology Initiatives (such as those launched in the current Framework Programmes) or different forms of ‘public private partnership’ be supported? What should be the role of European Technology Platforms?

Set up an improved and functional integration and structuring of the vision and strategy of the European industrial system in the frame of the technology scenarios to tackle societal challenges. This structuring is based upon: a technology vision sharing; a
guarantee of medium to long-term continuous and reliable commitment; a reasonable and easy to access funding.

A regular use of joint public-private collaboration initiatives (JTI, PPP) on specific topics relevant to European policies and at the same time functional to the industrial system innovation and competiveness strategies should be considered. Moreover the industry involvement in the definition of public-private collaborative programmes and in the evaluation panels should be assured.

Industrial system involvement in traditional collaborative research, where the greatest integration between research systems, academy and industry takes place. Industry has invested strongly in ETP, building up stakeholder communities that have contributed to the design of a clear technology strategy in the different sectors. This lead to the creation of added value; it is important to avoid its dispersion and focus on its evolution (see the concept of ETInnovationP-HLG report on ETP) following a logical scheme that has been taken up in the Innovation Partnership concept.

Furthermore more attention should be paid on the demonstration activities regarding new technologies and innovative products on industrial and commercial scale.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? Very important

16. How and what types of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) should be supported at EU level; how should this complement national and regional level schemes? What kind of measures should be taken to decisively facilitate the participation of SMEs in EU research and innovation programmes?

Europe should support both the creation of new high tech SMEs and the innovation potential of traditional SMEs.

SME participation in projects should be foreseen regardless of the theme; a target of minimum participation of SMEs in large projects should be set; the participation of networks of enterprises should be sustained; a reward schemes for projects generating a patent or an industrial application or a start-up should be established.

On the integration between the CSF and National/Regional Funds it seems essential to: allocate the share of Structural Funds intended for R&I; standardize the project evaluation system; establish a guarantee fund or a regional bridge loan for SMEs in order to obtain EC pre-financing.
The role of the financial system is important to: promote the participation of banks to partnerships, encourage the access to alternative instruments such as venture capital and seed capital and business angels, revisit urgently the RSFF, broaden the subsidized credit to enterprises sub-programme and support venture capitals’ cross-border operations.

Lastly, it is crucial:

- to revise the regulations on State aid to increase the intervention in the case the beneficiary is a start-up created as a downstream outcome of a R&I project;
- to move towards simplification;
- reintroducing the exploratory award and the two-stage proposal submission;
- a major involvement of SMEs in the evaluation panels.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? Very important

17 How should open, light and fast implementation schemes (e.g. building on the current FET actions and CIP eco-innovation market replication projects) be designed to allow flexible exploration and commercialisation of novel ideas, in particular by SMEs?

The integration between CIP and the future CSF is agreed upon, developing a standardized set of rules for participation and possibly standardizing also evaluation criteria and project management procedures.

CIP could represent the innovation-focused section of the CSF and could include all instruments addressing enterprises and supporting entrepreneurship.

Funds should be allocated allowing public resources to cover the initial research phases and involving private investors in the phases approaching the commercialization phase addressed by CIP.

Regarding project structure, the Innovation Plan concept should be introduced representing an operational plan with the relative business plan aimed at the commercialization of research results.

The Innovation Plan should be foreseen since the beginning of the project and should run in parallel with it. Of course, the realization of such activities needs an adequate allocation of resources and experts from the economic-financial sector. In this way the flexibility of the link between research and innovation would be increased thanks to a greater coordination between the different EU funding instruments.
In any case accelerating times and procedures of funding programmes is quite urgent. A possible solution could come from open calls for proposal, that is well-funded calls allowing for continuous submission of projects or within a deadline of at least six months from publication.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**

18. **How should EU-level financial instruments (equity and debt based) be used more extensively?**

The diffusion of the *Risk Sharing Finance Facility* (RSFF), instrument established by BEI at the beginning of FP7, has been smaller than expected, in that traditional instruments to access financing have proved to be more convenient for SMEs. Therefore it should be improved in order to favour its use by SMEs.

The subsidized credit to enterprises sub-programme should be broadened also in light of the novel instruments developed (or under study) by the EU: besides the RSFF, an *Innovation Start-up facility* focused on *seed* and *start-up financing* (and in particular on business angels), the development of risk capital, funding of knowledge transfer for the exploitation if intellectual property, introduction of *proof of concept*.

An *European Growth and Innovation Facility* should be established, that is a fund to finance enterprises growth and focused on transnational investments.

A greater participation of banks and all financial operators in partnerships is desirable, especially in future European Innovation Partnership (EIP), and the dialogue among finance, research and industry should be fostered.

Concerning the SMEs, their immaterial assets are not adequately evaluated: the creation of a guarantee fund or a regional secured loan for SME should be a valid tool.

Finally, State aid regulations need to be revised, with a particular focus on the Risk Capital directive.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**
19. Should new approaches to supporting research and innovation be introduced, in particular through public procurement, including through rules on pre-commercial procurement, and/or inducement prizes?

Concerning the introduction of novel instruments for innovation-oriented research activities, in particular those addressing the societal challenges, it is essential to introduce ‘public procurements’ and/or ‘inducement prizes’. These instruments could also help in strengthening industrial participation and in giving more social visibility and concreteness to research.

Consequently, the public sector should have a more active role in stimulating private investments, creating new markets through greater use of public procurement to spur innovation and improving structural conditions.

The EC should define a clear set of rules to:

- Ensure the participation of all actors.
- Guarantee transparency in the management of intellectual property.
- Detail the timing and the characteristics of good and/or services to be introduced to the market.

This approach should ensure both an increase in growth and development and a quicker path towards the so-called Social economy.

Lastly, innovation processes deriving from scientific projects results should be sustained, facilitating access to BEI funds.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**

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20. How should intellectual property rules governing EU funding strike the right balance between competitiveness aspects and the need for access to and dissemination of scientific results?

Rules concerning IPR should strike a good balance between access /dissemination of scientific results and competitiveness aspects.

Suggested measures:

- Restore the mandatory Technology Implementation Plan (TIP) within projects as in FP5. The TIP should become an integral part of project lifecycle.
- Include a financial investor (business angels, venture capitalists, etc) in the evaluation panels.
- Establish special terms for funds co-investing in businesses willing to patent.
• Promote funding instruments for the acquisition of patent licenses and acting as intermediaries with sub-licensees.

• The Open Access initiative has been strongly appreciated for its role in the dissemination of the results of research. On the other hand this kind of initiative has to be well balanced in order to ensure the “private” competitiveness in the IPR management.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**

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**STRENGTHENING EUROPE’S SCIENCE BASE AND THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA**

21 **How should the role of the European Research Council be strengthened in supporting world class excellence?**

The ERC is an innovative instrument that needs to be sustained in that it funds ‘curiosity driven’ frontier research, regardless of its industrial application.

Procedural and management anomalies need to be removed. In particular the following measures should be adopted:

• The adoption of the *full cost* system, that better allows reimbursement of personnel and equipment costs.

• Transparency in the procedure of Scientific Council members appointment

• Establishment of a third type of ERC grant addressing PhDs.

• The publication of ERC evaluations reserve lists, i.e. approved projects that cannot be funded due to lack of resources. The publication of the lists could allow national funding.

• The publication and the evaluation of funded projects to verify the structure and the strengths of winning proposals and gather useful information on how to outline funding requests.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Very important**
22. How should EU support assist Member States in building up excellence?

In the future EU programming excellence should be built investing in:

- ‘Curiosity driven’ or bottom-up research, typical of ERC.
- ‘Problem solving’ research, typical of applied projects.
- ‘Availability of Large Research Infrastructures’ to provide access to instrumentation and expertise.

Therefore the main suggestions are to:

- Maintain the FP7 approach to ERC, overcoming the above-mentioned anomalies, increasing resources and using the map of grant allocations to help Member States to define their intervention plans.
- Give more relevance to ‘converging technologies’ in Cooperation, considering their transversal nature and cross-sectoral application.
- Increase support to Large Research Infrastructures, identified to have a central role for development and innovation.

Excellence cannot be built without investment in high professional training. A scientific culture should be created in order to develop a knowledge-based society, capable of acknowledging the value of research and excellence. The ERC, the People Programme, the EIT and the Knowledge Society represent the instruments to be used and fund to reach this goal.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? Very Important

23. How should the role of Marie Curie Actions be strengthened in promoting researcher mobility and developing attractive careers?

The MCAs should be kept as the main mobility, training and career development programme for researchers at all stages of their career, in any field of research. To develop more attractive careers, there should be an increasing support to international/interdisciplinary/intersectoral doctoral programme. In designing the future of EU mobility programme more focus should be then placed to the initial training of researchers, with a further development at EU level of IDPs and EIDs and post-PhDs programmes. There is also a need to further increase the involvement of the industrial, services and financial sectors in the training of PhDs/post-PhD candidates. This could be possible by simplifying the rules allowing the participation of SMEs in Marie Curie
schemes. The strengthening of new forms of collaboration with third countries should be also an important issue to consider, as well as a further harmonization at EU level of social security and taxation rules (including pension rights). For increasing ToK, more senior staff should be allowed to short-term secondments and further development and use of Open Access is recommended. Enhancing and allowing financial synergies with other RTD and EU funding programmes (such as SF) should also be considered. Co-funding should be maintained but not replacing the successful individual MCAs, which should remain as one of the most important EU funding instrument for researchers. To conclude, the total budget should be strongly increased, as well as specific mobility grants. The use of flat rates/lump sums might help in financial simplification.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Very important**

24. What actions should be taken at EU level to further strengthen the role of women in science and innovation?

A stronger, systemic and crosscutting gender perspective to reinforce the presence of women science and innovation is needed. Gender equality in European Science has to be reached by acting in the following areas:

- more women in research;
- introduction of gender perspective in the research topics;
- the possibility of providing a budget to finance gender-specific research activities (call Marie Curie, lines of activity in WP, etc).

Specific actions, for instance calls, paths reserved for women already in training, specific scholarships, incentives and prizes for female scientists, for specific projects that require the participation of women researchers, especially for projects with technology transfer, have to be taken. They have to tackle common gender problems in European R&I (lack of female students in specific scientific sectors, leaky pipeline, monitoring and data collecting of female participation, especially in high level position, sharing of best practices from public private research entities, obstacles in career development, awareness campaign).

Project lifecycles/activities have to take in consideration specific family-related needs. In the evaluation of proposals gender experts have to be involved as well as additional award criteria for the projects with high participation of women. A gender advisory
board has to advise the EC and the EC has to find more synergies with the existing committees (i.e. the Helsinki group).

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Important**

25. **How should research infrastructures (including EU-wide e-Infrastructures) be supported at EU level?**

Infrastructures should be a priority in future EU programming. Considerable resources should be allocated to allow the creation of new research infrastructures, building on successful examples of existing ones and on the work of the ESFRI, and guarantying their long-term sustainability, and at the same time coordinating and integrating the next CSF, Structural Funds and BEI funds in a new financial engineering scheme.

A limited number of 'interdisciplinary' infrastructures needs to be identified, chosen on the basis of the evaluation of their impact on science, technology, industry, as well as on society and economy. In this context the further development of e-infrastructures is important to allow remote and virtual access to research facilities and scientific information. This could be a way to increase Europe attractiveness, also for non-EU researchers.

The combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches should be maintained. The development of EU infrastructures is based on the subsidiarity principle, therefore on national co-funding capacity. Currently, Europe supports mainly the added value of infrastructures at European level (networking, coordination, experiments, *ad hoc* campaigns, *transnational access*, etc.); on the contrary, resources allocated to the creation of new infrastructures (from prototype to production) are quite limited.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Very important**

26. **How should international cooperation with non-EU countries be supported e.g. in terms of priority areas of strategic interest, instruments, reciprocity (including on IPR aspects) or cooperation with Member States?**

International cooperation activities should address the global challenges allowing Europe to participate to global solutions. General framework conditions should be put in place to have international cooperation calls. Especially links to emerging markets and
new knowledge and innovation hubs outside of Europe have to be strengthened. Moreover Europe needs a new international cooperation strategy to increase the quality of the EU research activities and the critical mass as well as the participation to global research and innovation networks. The opening to and the financing of Third countries should be based on variable geometry approach in line with the research activities and objectives. Therefore it is a key issue to have clearly defined strategic goals. This is important to avoid the appropriation by other non EU States, of advanced knowledge and new technologies developed by European researchers and their subsequent exploitation of new market opportunities. It would be important if the EC promotes and facilitates regional or multiregional dialogue. In this case for instance it would be useful to define some areas of strategic importance, like the Mediterranean one, and sustain also with allocated budget the participation of third countries to specific research programmes as well as the sharing and common dissemination of research results.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? **Very important**

### 27 Which key issues and obstacles concerning the ERA should EU funding instruments seek to overcome, and which should be addressed by other (e.g. legislative) measures?

To build the European Research Area it is crucial to ensure, besides the mobility of researchers and knowledge transfer, a better global governance structure, progressive alignment of national programmes, reorganization of administrative rules, improvement of cross-border mobility and in general more coordination in supporting RDI.

This objective can be reached in different steps and timings foreseeing:

- The harmonization of procedures, rules, forms, definitions, evaluation criteria, agreements, technical and financial reports.
- Direct access at national level funding of all participants, if needed on the basis of reciprocity.

This conditions should constitute the objective of an *ad hoc* directive. A first application could be done in the Joint Programming introduced in FP7.

Concerning the mobility of researchers, the role of the ERA should not be limited to geographical mobility (international mobility), but should rather be considered as an essential tool for knowledge sharing among different scientific disciplines and as an
efficient instrument for exchange of competences between universities and industry (inter-sectors mobility).

The current obligation to open pre-commercial ‘procurements’ published by Member States to all interested parties is an important precedent to make reference to.

How important are the aspects covered in this question? Important

CLOSING QUESTIONS

Are there any other ideas of comments which you believe are important for future EU research and innovation funding and are not covered in the Green Paper?

- In the Green Paper, issues related to the diffusion and dissemination of research results are not sufficiently dealt with, considering that they play a key role in innovation processes. The Open Access instruments could be taken as an example.

- Furthermore, the Treaty of Lisbon foresees new duties for the EU – see for example the European External Action Service. One the priorities should be the development of research activities needed to support European policies.

- With a comprehensive, interdisciplinary and comparative research approach, research can help meet present and future societal challenges, while identifying and developing opportunities for innovation in the context of society. In order to achieve these goals, it is necessary that a society-oriented and society-driven “challenge” is included in the Common Strategic Framework.